Medina River showcased today

Few San Antonians have seen the 1,200 acres of archaeologically sensitive land on the city’s South Side now called the Land Heritage Institute.

Today, however, the institute's Native SA event offers a chance to experience land occupied by humans for at least 10,000 years.

At 1349 Neal Road, between Applewhite and Pleasanton roads, the free event is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will feature guided and self-guided hikes, hayrides, presentations on native plants, Native American dancers, native foods, music and artisans.

“We're trying to showcase all that is native to San Antonio and South Texas,” said Ramon Vasquez, a spokesman for the group, who also heads the American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions.

“You'll get to experience a land museum that showcases every culture that shaped the state of Texas, starting with the first people, the American Indians, the Spanish and Mexican cultures and the first German settlers of the area,” he said.

“At the same time, you'll get to embrace beautiful South Texas terrain and hike along the Medina River.”

Native plants and crafts will be for sale.

“We'll have a native tree giveaway,” Vasquez said. “We'll be looking at some of the native reptiles of South Texas. We'll also have a curandera talk about native medicinal plants.”
Though the Land Heritage Institute is open every second Saturday of the month and by appointment, Vasquez called the event “a rare opportunity.”

He said the Applewhite reservoir project, proposed in the early 1990s but defeated by voters twice, could have jeopardized the land and what it can tell archaeologists and others.

“The fate of this property could have had a totally different outcome if not for the voters of San Antonio,” he said.

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Land Heritage Institute http://aitscm.org | American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions